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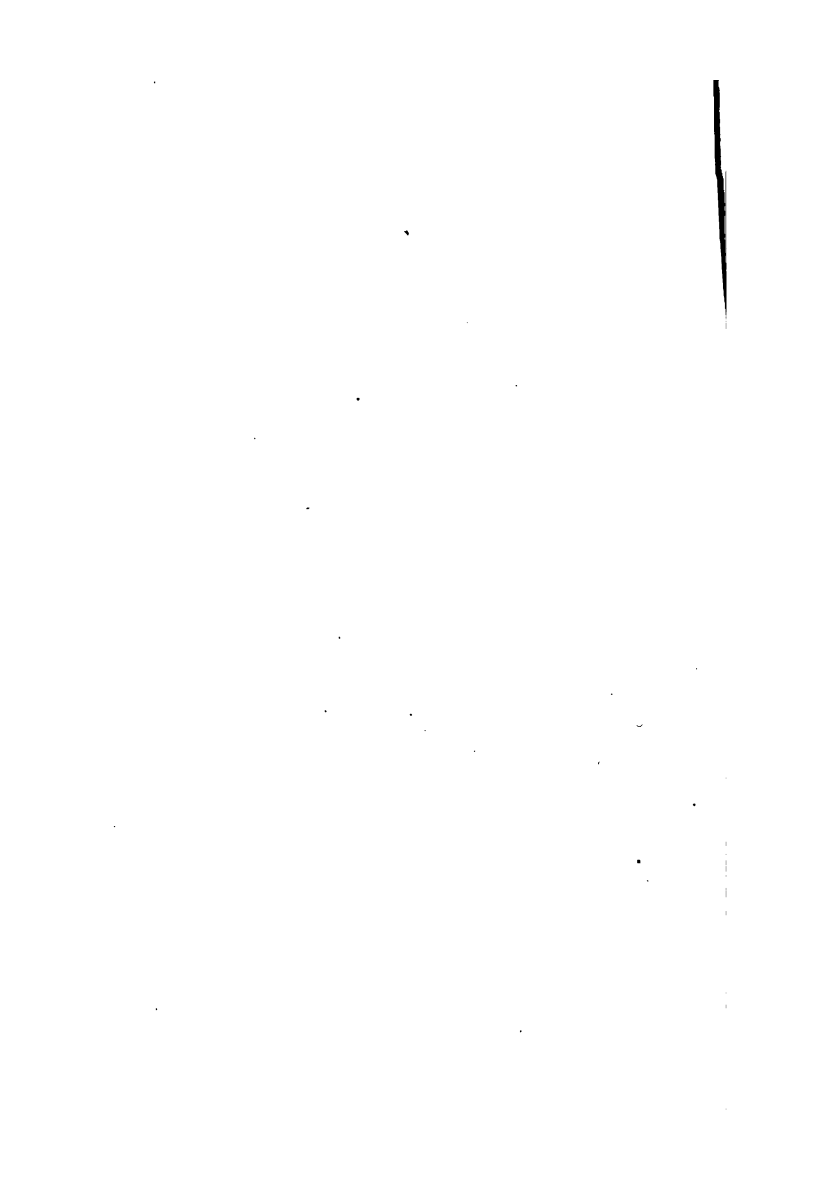
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Burgess
on
Personal
Godliness





GREAT TRUTHS
FOR
Thoughtful Hours.

No. III.

THE
POWER OF PERSONAL GODLINESS.

*Under the Title of "GREAT TRUTHS FOR
THOUGHTFUL HOURS" the Publishers
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most busy, while the matter and style will be
such as to woo to a repeated perusal.*

**13, Paternoster Row,
December 1st, 1853.**



THE
Power of Personal Godliness

IN
EVANGELIZING MANKIND:

AN ADDRESS TO ALL WHO PROFESS AND
CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS.

BY THE
REV. HENRY BURGESS, LL.D. & PH.D.,
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE;
CURATE OF ST. MART'S, BLACKBURN.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"—Matt. v. 13.

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."—2 Tim. iii. 5.

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TO THE
PROFESSING MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH
OF CHRIST,

This Address

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

FOR WISDOM.

If Thine, great Spirit! is the cause I plead,
Then deign my erring mind and pen to guide;
For well I know, the wisdom which I need
Can only be by wit like Thine supplied;
Without Thee, I am lost in thought's wild tide.

Oh! let no love of self my work impair,
I would be well content *Thy* voice to be;
Make me, like pearly dew or morning air,
From love of power and vain ambition free,
Unseen and lost, except when serving Thee.

I seek *my* honour if *Thy* will I do—
My peace, if what I write myself I feel:
Of those great truths give me a clearer view,
On which depend my own and others' weal;
Oh! now extend Thy hand, which all can heal.

INTRODUCTION.

THE substance of the following pages has before appeared in a printed form ; and a small impression was disposed of with a rapidity which implied that the Address was well received. The Author was favoured with still more clear indications of success, in the testimonies of those on whose judgment he could rely as to the adaptation of the little work to general usefulness. He has, therefore, felt it his duty to recast the whole of the Address, to make additions, to improve it to the best of his ability, and to send it forth on a wider field of Christian effort. The few years which have passed since the subject first employed his pen have strengthened his conviction, that in *personal holiness* Christians must find that which alone can raise them up to the exigencies

of the times in which we live, and make them the light of the world and the salt of the earth. This is eminently an age of knowledge, which of itself "puffeth up;" and thus, while the intellect is being enlightened, the improvement of the heart is far less evident. Let us seek more of that love which "edifieth," and solutions will then be far more easy of all the great moral problems by which the Church and the world are perplexed and agitated.

Blackburn,
January 29th, 1854.

THE
POWER OF PERSONAL GODLINESS
IN EVANGELIZING MANKIND.

“Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted.”—**MATT. v. 13.**

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”
2 TIM. iii. 5.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

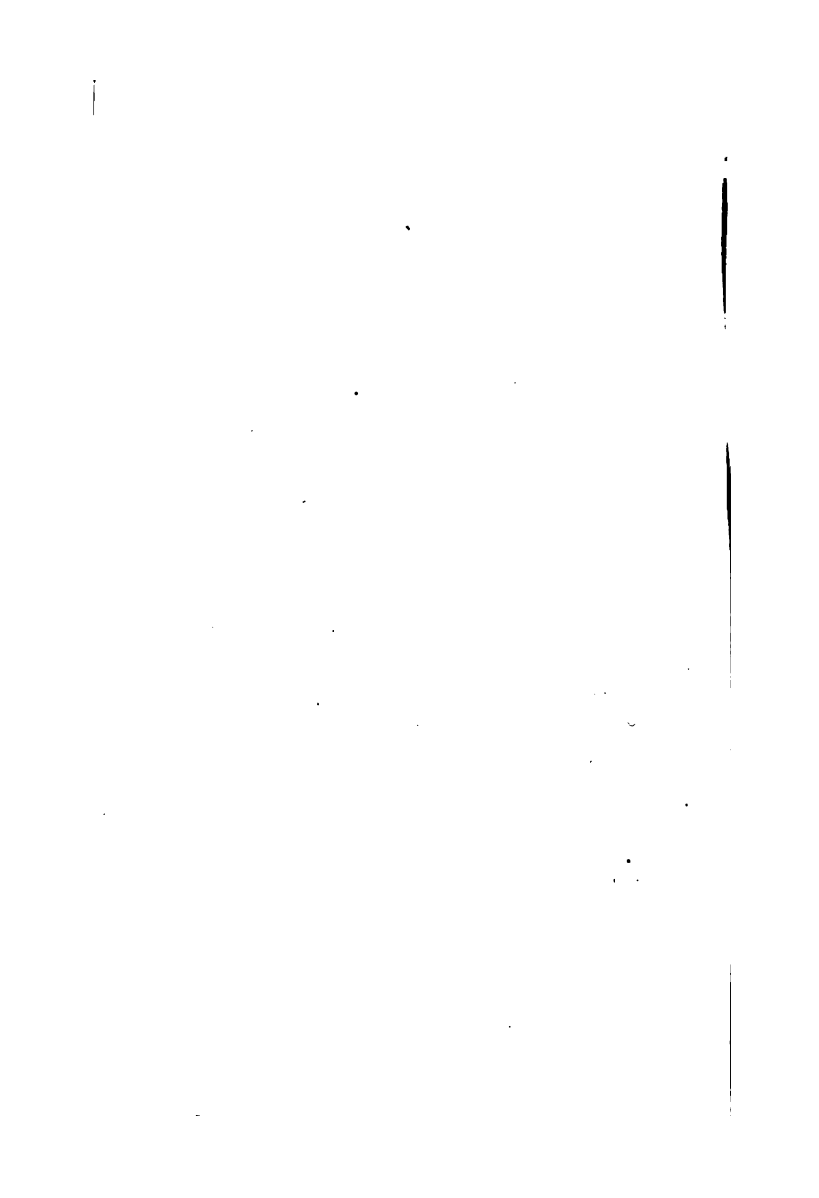
THE object contemplated in this address is the highest to which our attention can be directed; it is nothing less than our own happiness, and the present and future well-being of our fellow-men. In the texts quoted above, the theme we propose to illustrate is involved and implied. In the first, our Lord informed his disciples that they were to exercise a beneficial



lence. It will be seen by these remarks in what sense we are about to employ the statement, that *personal godliness is powerful in evangelizing mankind*. It is wanted to make us, as Christians, "the salt of the earth;" energetic and successful in our efforts to convert and sanctify those with whom we come in contact. Your devout and prayerful consideration is now solicited to these two general statements;—That the men among whom we live need evangelizing;*—and, That the instrument best adapted to bring about that result, is eminent personal religion in professing Christians.

I. MEN NOW NEED EVANGELIZING.—We are cautioned by the wise man against a disposition to depreciate the character of the age in which we live: "Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concern-

* We are aware that in one sense, and that an important one, all who live in a Christian country are *evangelised*, that is, they have the *glad tidings* more or less conveyed to them; but there is surely a higher meaning than this mere etymological one in this beautiful word. We now use it as meaning, *being moulded and fashioned by the Gospel, and living under its influence*.



First.—The state of worldly society in Britain, as distinguished from that which is religious, is alarming to the philanthropist, much more so to the benevolent Christian. It has features which fill every thoughtful beholder with dismay, from their intrinsic deformity, and from the apparent hopelessness of our efforts to make them less revolting. The vast increase of the population seems to outstrip all existing agencies for doing good, and every year the elements of evil become more gigantic, while the antagonism presented waxes feebler and less effective. Without attempting more than a slight sketch, we will select *three* of the characteristics of the times, in their worldly relations, as the basis for a few remarks :—Pauperism ; Sensuality ; and Neglect of the outward symbols of religion.

1. By pauperism we do not mean poverty, but the reckless and slavish spirit which throws such multitudes into a state of abject dependence, who might, by industry, become honourable and useful members of society. Inevitable poverty has a grace upon it which pauperism is wholly destitute of ; it is recognized in the Old

Testament as attracting to itself the care of heaven, and is committed to the sympathy of his more wealthy disciples by Christ in the New. It is compatible with every virtue, and a theatre on which the noblest graces are continually displayed. Who could wish the world to be without such characters as Ruth, gleaning in the fields of Boaz? the widow who cast two mites into the treasury of God? or the woman described by Cowper?—

“ Yon cottager who spins at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
Content though mean.”

This poverty is decent, though meanly clad; contented, though almost destitute; and in many senses, happy, while suffering privations. But pauperism has no redeeming qualities; it is reckless of its own, grasping of the property of others. Its life is one continued battling against industry, and for the possession of that which the labour of others has acquired.* Its heart is of stone;

* It is worthy of observation, that in proportion as a spirit of *communism* prevails in the operative classes, it approximates them in *this feature* to pauperism. The Preston weavers are at this time endeavouring to maintain the principle, that successful

kindly affections it has none. Dirty in person, ferocious in spirit, irreligious and Christless in soul, it extorts from those who have them, those necessities for which it will not itself strive. Like the army of locusts in eastern climes, it destroys all before it, and, unless its ravages had been checked, would soon have left no green spots nor fruitful fields in our beloved country. Yet this evil is increasing, baffling legislative wisdom, and filling Christian benevolence with dismay.*

And well may we be dismayed, for what hope is there that the salt of the earth will purify such characters as these, unless applied in more than ordinary pungency and vigour? The last hope of a Christian man, seeking to reclaim the prodigal and the wanderer, is, that misfortune may yet tame the wilfulness of the soul, and trouble

industry should share its gains with those who are left behind in the race. Mendicancy does the same; it asserts a right to be maintained out of the property which labour has secured. (January 1854.)

* It is true that if we regard the poor-rate as a test of existing pauperism, the evil seems to have diminished; but is it not the fact, that a more stringent law has thrown vast numbers upon other resources of pauperism, by which society is still more heavily taxed, such as *mendicancy* and *petty theft*?

bring it in penitence to its God; but this expectation is here unwarranted, for what would be misfortune and trouble to others, to these are congenial and customary circumstances; so that nothing which can soften remains to be applied. What *God* can do, exceeds the compass of our thoughts, and in his mercy there is always hope; but little can the most sanguine *man* expect to glean of Christian good from so unpromising a field. Yet this is the condition of countless multitudes in Britain. The numbers of those who live a vagrant life, and of those who depend on their parishes for support, who can calculate? Especially if we add to these the tens of thousands, who, by frequenting fairs and other places of public amusement, and having no settled dwelling, are entire outcasts from all means of grace.

It is not common for social evils to be contemplated in their relation to irreligion, and therefore some may be surprised that such prominence should be given to pauperism in this Essay. But if Christianity is ever to do its work among our population, it will be by a constant

recognition of the connection between degrading social habits and sentiments, and the neglect of the interests of the soul. The exhibition of what Christianity requires and forbids, in a discursive and general way, is too common in religious instruction ; we must descend to the most minute particulars if good is to be done.

2. Sensuality is confined to no class ; it spreads over the highest and the lowest, and all grades between. The term is generally used in a restricted sense, applicable only to some of the appetites and passions ; but we now apply it to all pursuits which end in personal gratification, from brutal lusts to the more refined indulgence of personal adornment. Who will deny that this is a sensual age ? Did *mind* secure but a small portion of attention, how different would the aspect of society be ! In the higher classes, the luxuries which lawfully belong to that state engross their possessor, leaving him no time to reflect upon, much less to perform, the duties which property brings with it. Among the middle orders, fine houses, fine dresses, expensive tables, a constant apeing of the manners of those above

them, lead to excessive meanness, to corroding cares, and too often to poverty and ruin. That each man should be as *respectable* as his neighbour by any and by all means—that none must be left behind in the competitions of trade and commerce,* without the whole soul and body striving against such a catastrophe—that good is to be found only in wealth and luxury—are doctrines openly acknowledged, and obeyed with an engrossing ardour which leaves time for no other thoughts, no higher pursuits. In the lower classes the same irritability and morbid

* "Is there no master-mind among us who will come out from the crowd and preach a new crusade—a temperate and rational crusade, against the excessive greed of gain, the inordinate thirst for distinction, and the feverish craving for notoriety, which so intensify all our daily pursuits? Will no one, by the power of his eloquence, and the weight of his example, teach us that a wise ambition might be well contented with simpler modes of life, more natural habits of society, fewer luxuries, less sumptuous entertainments, less stimulating enjoyments, less foolish rivalry, less extravagant display, less envy, and less ostentation, than now distinguish us? Will no man, eminent by position, and admirable in character, impress the laborious divine, the studious advocate, the anxious merchant, the dreaming artist, and the ambitious man of letters, with the wisdom, not to say absolute necessity of recreation and relaxation, either in the cricket-field, the tennis-court, the gymnasium, or in his own playground among his own children,—point out, in short, any escape from

excitement which animate those above them, lead to low and corrupting pleasures. In large cities, gin-palaces, crowded from morning till night, on Sundays as well as on other days; in retired and rural districts, beer-shops, the scenes of constant folly and drunkenness, shew us how a bold peasantry is becoming the disgrace of its country instead of its pride, and with what fatal speed its ranks are pressing on to the vortex of voluntary pauperism. The sight of the eye, the hearing of the ear, the gratification of the appetites, absorb all men with few exceptions. Quiet domestic duties; frugal pleasures in which the whole family may join, without expense and without remorse, are becoming daily less attractive, and more lost sight of. This is sensuality, when men, whether high or low, cannot be happy except in the possession of visible and tangible pleasures; and this is a state fatally opposed to morality and religion.

One fearful sign of our times, in relation to

the enthrallment of our studios, our studies, our counting-houses, our 'chambers,' and our clubs?"—*English Churchman*, Jan. 12th, 1854.

this subject is, that public opinion seems now to be all on the side of this exclusive attention to *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*. Once, a benevolent man could advocate the observance of the Sabbath without being laughed at or frowned upon, but *now* it is considered contrary to political economy and the liberty of the subject, to seek to promote quietness, and rest, and home religion on that holy day. The higher classes go to church *once*, and think themselves then at full liberty for any after-amusements; the lower orders are tempted by gin-palaces, and rural tea-gardens, and railroads, to obliterate old English habits and level us with our continental neighbours. At the bottom of all this there is *sensuality*.

3. A neglect of the outward symbols of religion may by some be thought of no importance if religion itself is wanting; but such are shallow reasoners, and still shallower thinkers. When is a child in greater danger,—when surrounded by the means of grace, such as parental warning, family prayer, and Sunday duties,—or when away from all these associations, and living in neglect

of them? While the prodigal son remained at home, we may presume, indeed, that his heart was astray in some degree, but he was restrained from outward excesses; and it was not until he went far off from the associations of his youth, that he devoured his living with harlots, and riotously wasted his substance. God has wisely adapted his gracious bestowments to produce impressions on those who are in the midst of them, and highly important are the lower and incidental advantages of a connection with the means of grace. But it is now generally acknowledged that such means are losing their hold on the masses of society, and that Bibles are less read, Sabbaths less revered, places of worship more neglected. The multitudes who crowd the streets of London and large towns, during all the hours of the Sabbath; the amusements which are furnished for that day; the great number of shopkeepers who carry on their trades regardless of church-going bells and the attractions of chapels, all bear their loud and uncontradicted testimony to what we are advancing.

We confess that if this were all we could say on this subject, we should be unable to draw any conclusion unfavourable to the state of society in our days. It might be the case that pauperism, and sensuality, and neglect of the means of grace, were in full activity and even progressing, and yet moral and evangelical influences might also be in advance, working more powerfully from year to year, and gaining numbers of the rising and increasing population. There would be a satisfaction in knowing that, if evil were gathering strength among our fellow men, truth and piety were at least keeping pace with their opponents. But the fearful fact stares us in the face, that this is not the state of things at present among us. The number of enrolled believers* in the Church of Christ becomes less every year, when the increased population is taken into account. Thus the painful conclusion is

* Perhaps the fairest test of Christianity being something more than a *name* is the attendance of its disciples at the supper of the Lord;—such persons may be called *enrolled believers*, although we are aware how much formality and real ungodliness may be associated with such communion.

forced upon us, that the *only means* to which we can look with any confidence for enlightening and sanctifying the world, are, from some cause, inefficient. The balm of Gilead is losing its restorative qualities; the physician is withdrawing; the patients die by thousands for want of healing. While there is no lack of funds for religious purposes if zealously sought for; while there are hundreds of preachers without cures; while Biblical criticism is making more sure the foundations of the faith; while Bibles are to be procured at merely nominal prices, and are gladly given to the poor for nothing,—the people yet perish for lack of knowledge, and go down to the pit without hope!

Secondly. The Church must now engage our attention, and we naturally turn to it as to the bright side of a dark picture, to refresh our spirits with sunny prospects and verdant spots. In one sense this expectation is realized, for all that is really good is found within the precincts of the visible Church; but the sunshine is dim, inclining to a cloudy day, and the greenness approaches to a sere and yellow hue. The defects

and sins of professing Christians must therefore be recorded as well as the follies of the world.

1. Formality is an increasing evil in the Church of Christ. When men awoke from the slumbers of papal error in the sixteenth century, or when the religious mind became conscious of its supineness in other extraordinary seasons of revival, they exhibited an activity strangely contrasted with their former dozing and prostrate condition. Religion had then a spirit with it, although it animated but the minority; it was carried into all the pursuits of life, and excited attention by its health and vigour. But now, much of the energy has given way to a morbid feebleness, and a church-and-chapel-going formality presents itself on every side. There is zeal enough for externals, such as creeds, modes of government, missionary operations, and Bible and tract societies, but the loving religion of the heart appears to be much wanting.

The mistake is often made by Christians, that because their modes of worship are simple, they are, on that account, out of the reach of for-

mality ; as though the worshipper in a cathedral with its rare architecture, flowing vestments, and delightful harmony, were at one end of the scale, and the frequenter of a Friends' meeting-house at the other ; the former being, as a matter of course, a very Pharisee in his trust in rites and ceremonies, and the latter a perfect model of true spiritual religion. It is a strong proof of the influence of outward signs on our modes of thought, that this error should ever be committed by sensible men ; yet it is constantly being done. The Friend wonders how an Independent, a Baptist, or a Wesleyan, can enjoy religion in the midst of singing and preaching ; and the latter extend their surprise to the Episcopalian or Romanist. The same remark holds good of those opposite classes of Episcopalians who are called Evangelicals or Tractarians ;— though children of the same mother, they are apt to ignore their common origin and relationship, and to consider their differences as fundamental.*

* We are aware that, in many cases, the difference between the various parties here mentioned is fundamental, and that

How difficult does it seem for us to comprehend, in its simple force, the declaration of our Redeemer, intended to correct errors similar to that now before us!—"But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This worship may thus be performed *anywhere*, the state of the heart, and not anything external, constituting true piety. May it not be found that, in the strife about Puseyism and low-church doctrine, between Independency and Episcopacy, Pædobaptism and the immersion of adults,—these outward symbols occupy that place in the mind which the Holy Ghost should have; and that the love of God is not shed abroad in the heart as it ought to be? Is there a general experience of that religion which secures us a daily and com-

therefore the defensive attitude of endangered religious principle is a proper one; but in most instances the stress is laid on matters not presumed to be essential to acceptance with God and final salvation.

plete reconciliation with God, makes holiness delightful, and sets our affections on things above? There may be more of this than we can discover on the surface, and most heartily do we hope there is; but is it a breach of charity to say that appearances are against the very general possession of this heartfelt religion?

2. Worldliness in religious professors may be thought to be much the same thing as formality, but it is in reality quite distinct. A formalist may be a despiser of the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and may hope to gain heaven by eschewing society altogether, and carrying on an ascetic discipline far from the sphere of human praise or blame. But a *worldly* professor must find his happiness among men, by mixing with them in their pursuits and pleasures, adopting their maxims, and contemplating the same ends. The happy medium between misanthropy and worldly conformity, which a wise Christian should occupy, is seldom attained and adhered to, as it eminently was by apostles and apostolic men in remote ages. "I wrote to you in an epistle," says St. Paul to the

Corinthians, "not to company with fornicators : yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world." Again, he indicates this middle course when he says, in the same epistle, "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go ; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake." Here it is plainly intimated that there is nothing wrong in itself, in association with worldly men, if certain bounds are observed. But, on the other hand, how earnestly the same apostle exhorts us not to be conformed to this world, and to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts ! The proper position of the Church is one superior to the world, and if that high character is but maintained, the more it associates with the latter the better it will be ; but how often and how readily does the world become dominant, and the church timid, complying, and imitative !

Let us ask a plain question, and let conscience reply in the presence of a heart-searching God. We have been for periods of various duration in connection with the visible Church, as professors of faith in Christ. On surveying the whole of that period, are we conscious that we have conquered the world, or has the world conquered us? Have we more power *now* than we had at the commencement of our religious history, in keeping ourselves unspotted from the pollutions, and uninfluenced by the principles, of those around us? If we can declare that we are more strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man *now* than we were *then*, whatever may be the declining state of the Church, *we* shall not be to blame as the cause of it. But if we are weaker now than then in resisting temptation and practising holiness, the conclusion is inevitable; we have assisted to produce the low state of the Church; for it is a community taking its character from that of the individuals composing it. May such searching investigations lead to immediate and thorough reform !*

* The doctrine stated by Paley, that Scripture expressions

3. Wrong notions of the duties of the Lord's day, and of the ends to be answered by Christian fellowship, appear to be on the increase. We meet in places of worship to praise God, and to beg blessings for ourselves ; we combine in fellowship for the observance of Christian ordinances and mutual counsel, aid, and comfort. But this should not be all. "Ye are the *light* of the world ; ye are the *salt* of the earth ;" and we presume it will not be disputed that the Church is instituted for the purpose of converting and blessing the world. But in what way is this end sought in large towns and cities ? A

about sin and holiness are to be modified when applied to modern Christian times, is received among us to an alarming extent, if not in the words of a theory, yet in actual practice. To talk of the *world* and the *Church* as diametrically opposed, and offering broad lines of difference as they are depicted in the Bible, is, in large portions of professedly Christian society, to lose all character for companionable qualities. This cannot be wondered at, when, *in fact*, there is so seldom any difference between the two, so long as some decent morality is observed by both parties. May we affectionately ask, what is meant by the baptismal vow so solemnly taken upon them by the largest part of Christians in this country ? "*I renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of this world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that I will not follow nor be led by them.*"

wealthy man enters his chariot, and drives four or five miles to hear a favourite minister, and belongs to a Christian society composed of members as scattered as the practicability of surrounding this minister as a nucleus will permit it to be. A tradesman will also leave his own neighbourhood, and walk with his family a great distance, attracted sometimes by old associations, sometimes by eloquence, and often by the phraseology and modes of statement of a particular creed. At the end of the Sabbath, such wanderers after the bread of life may feel that they have found enough for their own sustenance, but does it occur to them that they ought also to have some to spare for others? Behind the dwelling of the wealthy man, there are crowded streets filled with Sabbath-breakers and vicious characters;—in what sense has he been “salt” unto them? In close proximity to the tradesman are godless acquaintances, with whom he transacts business during the week, who have allowed the holy day to pass without uttering a prayer or listening to a religious discourse. O! for a warning voice to cry in the ears of the multitudes

who are now at ease in Zion, as they drink in the words of the eloquent orator, and receive comfort from sermons which confirm them in their favourite dogmas, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It appears to us that the post of a good man on the Lord's day is near his own home; that *there* he ought to exhibit an example which will influence others; and that *his* church and *his* sanctuary should be that which is most likely to exert a benign power on his thoughtless and irreligious neighbours. If it is replied, that there is no chapel of the sect to which a man belongs in his own neighbourhood; or that there being one of the right kind, the preacher does not entertain the same opinions with himself; or that the society connected with the place is above or below his own standard; then we ask, Are such things as these to be of more weight than the exercise of Christian kindness, and the happiness of immortal souls? If those who are already enlightened, and have daily access to the waters of life, prefer their own ease to the task of leading the impure and the thirsty to the same healing springs,—then, indeed, the

light of the world has grown dim, and the salt has lost its savour.

The mighty force which resides in a parochial system of religious influences must be better understood and more patiently tried, before we can say that the Church has done all that it could. Let a congregation apply itself to this work in all sincerity, and we will confidently implore on its behalf the effectual blessing of heaven. Averse as we are to distinctive titles for Christian communities, we will yet suggest one for this which shall point out its character, and define its aims. Call it **THE CHURCH AT HOME**, and then let all its arrangements bear out its title. Mark out its sphere in the vicinity of your own residences, now, perhaps, destitute of the means of grace, and resolve to admit none within it from without, but to do all the work yourselves.* Within this circle, faithfully

* We sincerely believe that the existing parochial organization of our country only demands to be faithfully worked out to be the platform for the operations here described. But we know this is not the opinion of some good men, and we prefer to use general terms to running the risk of injuring our design by language which, while we believe its truth, would be considered partial and exclusive.

try what a Christian people can do on behalf of the wicked in the midst of them. Such an object, earnestly contemplated and followed up, will soon attract the most careless within its reach, and if all the members of the community work properly, such a neighbourhood will speedily exhibit a raised and improved character. Attracted by a zealous people and a flourishing state of things, persons from a distance will be sure to come and ask for admittance; but they must be refused in a Christian spirit, and told to go and do their own work in their own spheres. If it is said, that there are now large congregations in bad neighbourhoods, and that the members of them distribute tracts and visit from house to house, we reply that we know it, and appreciate highly such self-denying labour. But we require more than this: we wish *all the influence a man has* to be employed on behalf of Christianity. Tract distribution and occasional visits by strangers will be far less efficient than actual residence on a spot, upon which we can throw all the minor, and yet powerful, influences of everyday life.

We do not doubt that this *theory* will meet with approbation, and that all will agree that, if carried out, it would contribute much to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among men. But we are equally sure it will be rejected as impracticable, and we are disposed ourselves to assent to this decision. But its impracticability can arise from nothing but the want of self-sacrifice and zeal on the part of professing Christians. Their selfishness is too strong, and their apprehension of existing evils too indistinct, to allow them to be excited to action ; and in this supineness we discover the painful fact, that the salt of the earth has lost its savour, that earnest personal religion is the want of the times.

4. Charity, in reference to other men's sins is not cultivated. It may sound paradoxical, but it is true, that in proportion as the Church is holy itself, it will be compassionate to the backslider ; and conversely, that in a declining and lukewarm state it will be more severe in its treatment of offenders. The truth of the matter is, that love is a grace which blooms last in the garden of the regenerated soul, and the degree in

which it is developed is a sure test of the state of the renewed and inner man. In the Church of Christ we are indebted to the love of God for everything we possess. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." From this the conclusion is self-evident—"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." But this cordial and full forgiveness of those who have injured us, or are supposed to have done so, is manifested too little, and there is reason to fear lest our Master should have occasion to say to us, "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" Under various excuses, a malignant spirit is too often allowed to display itself. One man will absent himself from the Lord's Supper, because another is there who has offended him, although he may have made ample apology, or although he may be in entire ignorance of the feeling existing against him. Another considers it his duty to protest against sin, by keeping the penitent offender for a long time under his frowns. We

need more of that truly religious spirit which makes us unhappy when at all estranged from our brother, and will not allow us "to let the sun go down upon our wrath." A full, frank, and lasting pardon should be spontaneously granted by a good man, since his own sins are freely forgiven at the throne of grace. This is a serious subject, for we are clearly told that no answer will be given to our own prayers, till we have, from our very hearts, forgiven our brother his trespasses.

5. There is reason to fear that private prayer, and the study of the Bible, are less attended to among Christians than they once were. We speak on this subject with hesitation, since we cannot be sure that this is the case, God and our own hearts alone being cognizant of what we do in our closets. But in Christianity there is so much compactness and union between all its various duties, that one cannot be neglected without the effects being visible, and we thus judge, by certain results, that private devotions engage the attention and time of the Christian world less than they ought. There is nothing demanded of

us as Christians, which will so powerfully and manifestly affect our character, as secret communion with God, by prayer and the study of his word. Let these duties be faithfully performed, and formality, worldliness, and want of charity, *cannot* become our prominent failings. But, on the other hand, whatever may be our zeal in public, and however constant our attendance on the visible means of grace, if we neglect secret prayer and meditation, a sickly and inefficient religious state *must* be the consequence. However fair and flourishing a plant may look for a time, at the root of which there is some serious disease, it cannot be long before that radical evil is manifested; the leaves will appear a little less bright and firm; they will then lose their healthy green hue, and at last wither and die. As branches of the vine, believers can only bring forth fruit when they abide in close connection with the tree; severed from that they soon perish. Christ is the vine; and only by communion with him can we become productive.

We would not judge our brethren because their *mode* of holding intercourse with God is not the

same as our own, nor would we interpret too literally the exhortation to "enter into our closets and shut to the door," when we pray. Devotion displays itself differently in different minds, some being able to keep the flame alive amidst ordinary scenes and engagements, while others require it to be fanned in solitude and silence. Yet, as a general observation, it is true that it is dangerous to deviate from the arrangements which God has made on our behalf, and which we may be sure are most wisely adapted to our moral nature; and the experience of the great majority of Christians pleads for a systematic withdrawal from the duties of life for purposes of private devotion. In reference to the Bible, that certainly cannot be studied properly unless we are alone, and it must be confessed, that a very scanty portion of time is usually given to this duty. Are we wrong in stating, that in most instances, professors of religion derive their biblical knowledge from these three sources alone;—their early education, the reading of small portions of the sacred volume in the family, and its exposition in the pulpit? Another source *must*

be added, if religion is to flourish among us ; we must prayerfully read the Bible in private. We must approach nearer in our practice to that of the Psalmist, who said, "O how I love thy law ; it is my meditation all the day !"

In a certain sense, the complaint now suggested as probably deserved by the Church, seems set aside by the extraordinary *apparatus* which now exists for the circulation and explication of the Bible ; these means being far more abundant than in any previous age. Not to mention rival Bible societies on an extensive scale, commentaries, dictionaries of biblical subjects, Pictorial Bibles, Bible readings, and Bible illustrations drawn from every known source, to throw light on obscure portions, are furnished with a taste and refinement highly pleasing to every friend of religious truth, and would indicate an increased attachment to the Holy Scriptures. We hope we shall not be thought cynical when we express our belief that *this kind* of patronage, given to the Bible, is more on *literary* than *religious* grounds, and must be by no means confounded with the love of truth for its own sake.

That handsome Bibles are found more often now in ladies' reticules and in drawing-rooms, and that art delights to emblazon and adorn them, more than was ever known since the pen and pencil illumined with patient toil the ancient manuscript copies, cannot be denied. But this is not the same thing as loving the Scriptures for their own sake, as containing a daily rule of duty; and we know it is quite possible to be a biblical critic and *littérateur*, and not a biblical Christian.

6. The want of union in the visible Church must be noticed as a formidable evil;—perhaps it is both the result and the cause of a low state of personal holiness. Time, which it is said, heals all wounds, seems to fail in applying any balsam to those members of the Church, whose motto should be LOVE, and whose constant practice should be the bearing each other's burdens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ. Some think nothing of the divisions of Christ's body into sects and parties, and are even foolish and weak enough to apply to our schisms the mercantile doctrine, that good is done by competition. Others, pro-

fessing to see and lament the evil, do nothing to remedy it. They continue to do what must perpetuate discord ; they diminish their own faults and magnify those of their opponents ; or, they think *their* religious convictions are *everything*, while those of their neighbours are *nothing*. Union seems to be further off than ever, because there is less of that temper which alone can produce it ; a suspicion, namely, that we *may be wrong*, while those from whom we differ *may be right*. This remark applies to matters which do not enter into the substance of Christianity, for it is concerning them that there is so often *envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness !*

It would not be difficult to add to this short catalogue of defects now visible in the Church, but we have no wish to make it a complete one, even if we had the requisite insight into human conduct and motives ; we therefore now leave the painful task. We would only refer briefly, in this part of our address, to that influential class, the ministers of the Gospel, lest by leaving out all mention of them we should be thought influenced by partiality, or deficient in faithfulness. Let it

then be understood, that in all our previous observations we have included *ministers* in our idea of the Church at large, and wish all our hints and observations to apply to them, as well as to private Christians. The writer can affirm for one, at least, of this order of men, that a deep sense of infirmity is entertained; that he is conscious of much neglect of duty, and want of zeal. May he, and the class to which he belongs, be the first to make an onward movement, and to secure, by eminent personal religion, a larger measure of influence as the salt of the earth!

A very serious fact must be glanced at, at the close of our review of the World and the Church in our own land, and that is, that religion can never present itself to us with the charms and excitement of novelty, since we have been acquainted with it so long, and probably known all that can be taught respecting it. It can never come before us, as it appears to heathens, or to persons who have been but little associated with it. Alas! we have been but too familiar with the heavenly visitor, and having slighted it, its fresh

beauty and graces will perhaps occupy our hearts no more! It is far more difficult to revive habits fallen into disuse, than to form them at first. We have, therefore, in our future course, to counteract the natural law, that a downward career becomes more rapid as the descent increases; and thus those who have slighted the calls of the Gospel and lost their first love, are in circumstances of peculiar peril. We now turn to what we consider the only remedy for our ills, and the last hope for our fellow-countrymen.

II. THE INSTRUMENT ADAPTED TO EVANGELIZE MANKIND, IS PERSONAL GODLINESS.—

We will endeavour to define what we mean in a concise and distinct manner, that no confusion of ideas may accompany our readers in the following observations. To do this is not so easy as at first sight it appears; for to the question, What constitutes religion? many different answers have been given. The term *personal* limits indeed the subject in some degree, as in this connection it is always supposed to mean that which is felt, and allowed to exercise a constant power over the actions of life; yet even when

thus circumscribed, the subject will be differently apprehended by different minds. Strange ! that what in its own nature is so plain, should by the prejudices of education and custom become so complex.

The personal religion to which we attach so much importance in this Address, has much to do with the reason and judgment, but still more with the heart. The cordial assent of the mind is first gained to religious truth, as revealed in the Scriptures, and then that truth is allowed to sway the affections. Declension and backsliding consist in a discord between the head and the heart ; true piety arises from their harmony, and is most eminent when that harmony is most complete. To know and approve the good, and to follow the evil notwithstanding, is a wicked and unhappy state, leading a man to despise himself, to dread and put away thoughts of God, and to be constantly dissatisfied with those around him. But to *know* the ways of wisdom and to *walk* in them, is true peace ; peace with God, peace within the soul, and peace amidst all the distractions of outward life. Personal

religion, therefore, is not attendance on religious ordinances, however constant and regular ; for that may consist with a soul torn by conflicting passions, and always overcome by evil. It is not a knowledge of religious truth, which many have, and yet are constantly tormented with a "fearful looking for of judgment," at variance with all pure filial emotions. It is not a consent of the mind to the righteousness and holiness of God's law ; for a man may render that fully, and yet be tied and bound by the chain of his sins, so as to cry out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ! It is the giving up ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to the service of God, without reserve and without sorrow ; finding our peace in His favour, our safety in His protection, our present and everlasting all in His promises.

"Being justified by faith we have peace with God," a peace which passeth all understanding. Having by this faith access through Christ into a state of grace, or divine reconciliation and favour, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and the influence of this hope turns into bless-

ings all the troubles of life. "We glory, or rejoice in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." Thus united to God by a living faith in Christ, we receive the promise of the Holy Spirit, who reigns in our hearts as His temple, as declared by St. Paul; "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" By this indwelling of the Spirit we receive wisdom and strength to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord; to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts;" to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord:" to "set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth;" to bear all losses with peaceful equanimity, and to look forward to "the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls," when we shall inherit "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Of such a man God is the portion, His

service the delight, and heaven the fervently anticipated home. This is personal godliness.

As divine grace in the heart is progressive in its sanctifying operations, so there are varieties in personal religion, and it is retarded or advanced, strong or weak, in proportion as it secures the affections in the service of our Maker. How humiliating is the thought, that we should know all this, and yet not aim steadily at the fulness of Christian attainment, that "our peace may flow as a river, and our joy like an overflowing flood!" The imperfect sketch we have taken from the Word of God, may be there seen with all its details filled in, as a finished portrait; and it is only by beholding in that glass the glory of the Lord, that we can copy those features of character, and be changed into the same image. As we read these pages, let us compare our real character with what it ought to be, and what God is willing and able to make it. Let us not turn away from the contemplation lest we should become afraid of our own deformity, but let us apply at once to the work of attaining all that can be secured of personal

holiness, and likeness to the Lord. With such religion as this, we know full well none of the evils before described, as afflicting the Church, can be compatible, and before it, formality, worldliness, selfishness in our religious duties, uncharitableness, undevout habits, and discord among brethren, must give way, as darkness before the morning light. Let us suppose this eminent personal religion is ours, and then inquire what will be its bearings on our *usefulness*, and in what manner it will make us indeed "the salt of the earth," and give power to godliness. The answer to this question will be threefold;—it will give us correct views of the destitute condition of those who are irreligious; will suggest to us the wisest and most efficient measures for their benefit; and will infuse into us the requisite zeal to apply the remedy.

First. PERSONAL GODLINESS WILL GIVE US CORRECT VIEWS OF THE DESTITUTE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE IRRELIGIOUS. That we must *feel* before we are prepared to carry out any scheme of benevolence, is well known, and the

doctrine is illustrated by the histories of all philanthropists. This rule is recognized even in secular oratory, as in the classical aphorism, "If you wish me to weep you must first weep yourself." It was when the spirit of Paul was moved within him by seeing the senseless idolatries of the Athenians, that he was stimulated to preach to them Jesus and the resurrection, in those eloquent and convincing words which have come down to us. The great Howard wept over the sighing of the miserable, and the wounds of the fettered, in dungeons and prison-houses, before he brought himself to sacrifice his fortune, his domestic comforts, and his life, in seeking to meliorate their condition. We have proof of this fact every day in our own experience ; for a beggar may be ever so importunate, but if we doubt the truth of his representations, he will vainly attempt to extract from us an alms; but let us believe that his tears are springing from grief, and his wants pressing, and the heart will at once dictate to the hand what it should do. In the same manner, we must re-

cognize the reality of the spiritual evils of mankind before we can become active in relieving them.

It is also a law of our nature that we cannot feel for others unless we can form some definite conception of their ills, either by having ourselves experienced them, or by being aware that they *may* become ours. Thus we speak of men tormenting themselves with *imaginary* troubles; we pity the morbid state of mind under which they labour, but laugh at the phantoms their diseased fancy conjures up. Those keen sorrows of the soul which are experienced when it is first convinced of sin, and trembles under the threatened anger of God, are often treated as proofs of a deranged intellect, by unenlightened persons. Never having suffered *themselves* from such causes, they cannot believe they are real, and with mistaken kindness, endeavour to laugh the sufferer into his former ease. How vain are all such efforts! But let one who has similarly known the terrors of the Lord, approach the agitated soul, and He understands the case and can apply the remedy.*

* In this lies the difference between those who have merely

As an affair of doctrine or theory, the Christian world professes to entertain views of the misery of unregenerate human nature sufficiently gloomy to move the feelings and excite to action. Its received statements, indeed, in creeds, theological treatises, and even in hymns, often transcend the declarations of the Scriptures, and depict the condition of man, without God in the world, in the darkest colours. How constantly do we find passages in the Old Testament, which describe the abandoned profligacy of Israel and Judah, applied to mankind in general: as though modern phrases and modes of thought were not strong enough to exhibit its awful guilt and destitution! How commonly, for instance, is the graphic description given by Isaiah of his revolted country used for this end: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From

the *name* of Christianity and those who feel its *power*, a difference which divides our countrymen into two antagonistic parties, who never can be reconciled until either spiritual religion ceases to exist, or mere formalism gives up the ghost. The provinces of literature and of social life are as manifestly marked by these great religious distinctions, as is the Church itself in its outward appearances.

the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment!"* In the formularies of the Church of England, accuracy of views on a most sublime and mysterious subject is demanded as essential to salvation: "Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, *without doubt* he shall perish everlastingly." Among Protestant Dissenters it is rarely conceded that safety can consist with anything short of orthodox completeness on the Trinitarian question. If to err in matters of faith is so dangerous, where will the openly ungodly and sinners appear? And, further, as though this topic of human degradation and peril

* It is doubtless dangerous to allow our thoughts to be tied to *words* in the expression of religious feelings, and a plain, unfigurative representation of man's sinfulness, or one out of the common routine, will marvellously aid the Christian instructor of others. When once called to visit a sick man, the writer was cheered as he ascended the stairs by hearing him exclaim in piteous accents, "Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner!" But when he came to converse with the patient he found him cased in a hard covering of self-righteousness, which no arguments could pierce. He insisted that he had lived a good life, and could not properly be called a *sinner*.

were too engrossing ever to be forgotten, congregations sometimes give utterance to their sentiments upon it in such words as these :—

“ We lick the dust, we grasp the wind,
And solid good despise ;
Such is the folly of the mind
Till Jesus makes us wise.

“ We give our souls the wounds they feel,
We drink the poisonous gall ;
And rush with fury down to hell,
But Heaven prevents the fall.

“ The man possess'd among the tombs,
Cuts his own flesh and cries ;
He foams and raves till Jesus comes,
And the foul spirit flies.”

or the following equally pungent strains :—

“ Woe to the wretch that never felt
The inward pangs of pious grief,
But adds to all his crying guilt
The stubborn sin of unbelief.

“ The law condemns the rebel dead,
Under the wrath of God he lies ;
He seals the curse on his own head,
And with a double vengeance dies.”

As matter of *opinion*, therefore, nothing is wanted among us, in reference to the danger and misery of unregenerate human nature. All that

can be said that is disparaging and lamentable, is conceded at once. The Bible has stated the doctrine, and divines and private Christians have given its shades a yet darker colouring, in the terms they employ to express it.

But if all this is true, and those around us are actually perishing; if they have now, in active operation within them, principles which forbid real happiness in this world, and will infallibly sink them into everlasting perdition; where is the cry of horror which we raise as we contemplate the catastrophe, and where is the nervous and straining earnestness with which we rush forward to prevent it? Alas! we are too cool to warrant the conviction that we believe what we say! We must surely be describing the condition of some *former* world, and not that which is before and around us! It cannot be that *now* there are wounds and bruises and putrefying sores to heal, brands to snatch from the burning, prisons to unlock, and fetters to break! It is a *painting* on which we have been looking, and not a reality. It is true, it has all the vividness of life, for we almost hear the sighs of the unhappy;

we look on the degraded and fallen, already manacled by evil passions, and they appear to move in convulsive throes, and turn upon us a look as though asking for deliverance. But no, it cannot be! The skill of the artist has deceived us; it is but a picture, or how could we be so apathetic?

Among the spectators of this scene, there are some who stand out from the rest, and will not be persuaded that it is art, and not nature, on which they look. Each feature of misery, each fetter of bondage, each restless agonizing muscle, seems to awaken their sympathies, and impel them to measures of relief for the sufferers. While others go away uttering sentimentalities, as the Priest and the Levite swept past the wounded man, these gird themselves for action, and go among the dying and the dead. "Such were we," they say, as they stoop to staunch that wound, or pour balm into that fainting spirit. "Despair not, for your condition cannot be worse than ours was," is their encouraging language. Some of the miserable objects of their pity seek to hide themselves from their

gaze, as though too sensible of their deformed and filthy state, but their untiring friends soothe and encourage them. "Such were we, but we are washed, but we are sanctified, but we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; go to the same source of cleansing, and you will become as whole and clean as we are now." How different are the results from the contemplation of the same scene! Those who passed by on the other side, have retired perhaps to hear a discourse on the comforts of religion, or to attend a Missionary Meeting;* while these active philanthropists have won sinners to repentance, put on the defiled a change of raiment, and caused joy among the angels in the presence of God!

And why did these remain, and treat as living realities, what others appeared to contemplate as poetical fictions, as paintings or shadows? Be-

* God forbid that we should make such a remark as this in an uncharitable or censorious spirit! We must however think, that a large class of religious persons substitute sentimentality for true benevolence, and a morbid attention to their own *frames and feelings* or spiritual *comfort*, for a sound and healthy piety leading to action.

cause their souls were pervaded by a deep sense of their own deliverance. Those who passed on, acknowledged human guilt and sorrow, but the theme was not rendered important to them by a personal sense of former degradation and present spiritual privileges. As those restored to sight will pity the blind ; the ransomed prisoner sympathize with those who are yet captive ; and the subject of renewed health and vigour look with interest on the pale countenance of the invalid ; so will the man who enjoys peace in believing, be able to apprehend the real state of the ungodly around him. Irreligion will make men quite insensible to the religious wants of their fellows, for the blind cannot lead the blind. A low state of piety will receive no strong and impulsive impressions from the sight of spiritual destitution. But **PERSONAL GODLINESS** will have the case before it in all its depth and fulness of meaning, and proceed to apply the remedy.

" I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since ; with many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one, who had himself

Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars ;
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live."

Who is so likely to see the pain and danger of others' wounds, as one who has thus felt the misery of his own? Who is so fit to direct his fellow to the Cross as he who has experienced such marvellous blessings from it?

- *Secondly.* PERSONAL GODLINESS WILL SUGGEST TO US THE WISEST AND MOST EFFICIENT MEASURES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE IRRELIGIOUS.—As godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, it is often found that a truly religious spirit improves men's secular affairs, by giving them calmness and wisdom in the pursuit of them. It follows from the same principle, that sincere personal religion will tend to prosper us in our plans of benevolence, by teaching us the best methods of executing our designs; an advantage which cannot be expected by those who are agitated in spirit, and doubtful respecting their own interest in the divine favour. This tendency of true piety to make our path clear in

our efforts to bless others operates in various ways.

1. It makes us *alert and eager in seeking for success*, and thus quickens the faculties, as is always the case when the affections are engaged in the pursuit of an object. A parent, desirous of the well-being of his child, will not slumber at his post, but will look around on every hand and discover favourable opportunities where an indifferent person would pass them by. So an earnest wish to bless others will quicken the intellect, and point out means to be tried, which a mere *acknowledgment* of this duty would never suggest to us. Place an hireling in the sick chamber, and how many little attentions adapted to soothe the invalid will be neglected, which an affectionate relative would naturally display. In this great work of making the sickly spirit whole, formality is the hireling, and true piety the tender friend. If one plan fails, another will be tried, and this process will not soon be relinquished. Again and again, as Abraham returned to pray for the condemned city, benevolence will be animated by new hope, and still manifest its

zeal for the accomplishment of that which it deems so important. How different is this state of mind from that which leads us to be satisfied that we have done our duty, when we have made *one* attempt and been repulsed !

The work of Christian benevolence cannot be *sure* of a favourable result in individual cases ; it has only a moral certainty that, on the whole, its exertions will be successful. There must, therefore, be many disappointments which will make great demands on a persevering faith. We cannot work on mind as we can on matter, so as to expect an invariable sequence of cause and effect. There are two parties concerned in the result we hope to secure—man and God. Man has a will of his own, which we cannot alone sway and influence. God can do this, but He chooses his own time and way of operation. Believing piety will make us hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.

2. The religion for which we plead secures on our behalf *that wisdom which is profitable to direct* ; the inspiration of the Almighty which giv-

eth understanding, which is never withheld when sought, but is given in requisite supplies when we ask for it. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Burdened with a consciousness of our own guilt, and having many unrepented sins lying at the door, how can we expect that God will enlighten us to benefit others, even if, in such a state ourselves, we were anxious to do so? But "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," and pray for understanding to do effectually the work of God in the world. Prayer for this great end must be peculiarly acceptable to God, contemplating as it does the same objects for which Christ died, and for which he is ever interceding before the throne in heaven. In proportion as believers become the temples of the Holy Ghost, wisdom will characterize their movements, and their desires to lead others to righteousness will be suggestive of appropriate methods of doing so.

Is this connection between our own piety, and well laid plans for the conversion of the world, sufficiently thought of? May not the many abortive attempts to do good to others, in various departments of the Church, be attributed to our presumption in expecting to act rightly when our hearts are not wholly the Lord's? We are defeated as the Israelites were when they went up against Ai; their object was one which God approved, for he had commanded them to seek it, but it could not be gained until the accursed thing was put away from among them.

Apart from the inspiration of the apostles, there was an element in their characters which fitted them for the work entrusted to them, which they so admirably accomplished. They surveyed their duty with a single eye, gave themselves wholly to it, and exercised their highest faculties in adapting means to secure the wished-for results. In this respect they are models for all after ages, and teach lessons both to clergy and laity. Even Christ is an example for us, in his human relations, notwithstanding he possessed a divine nature; so the

apostles, although inspired, were always men, and acted under the ordinary influences of divine grace on the heart. They were successful, because they were intent on the object, and because their heartfelt piety enabled them to pursue it in a right spirit.

3. The experience of *what has been effected in our own case* will "give us the tongue of the learned, that we may know how to speak a word in season" to those who are yet in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. This is a most important aspect of the case now before us, for without this experience our efforts will be empirical; we shall indeed "run as uncertainly, and fight as one that beateth the air;" all our movements being directed by chance, and not under the guidance of wisdom. It is always conceded that the ministry of men who are themselves un-devout is comparatively useless, for this reason among others—that not having experience of divine things, it cannot direct the arrow to the conscience, nor probe and heal the wound when it is made. There may be an artistic adaptation to produce effect in oratory employed, but it will

not be efficient; and it has never been the case that an ungodly ministry has converted others to any extent. What are private Christians but *preachers* in their respective spheres, whose duty it is to win men to God, and how can *they* expect to accomplish, without piety, that which a public station and great natural talents cannot effect if destitute of it. If it were not folly to expect men to be more zealous for others than for themselves in the great affairs of salvation, we might urge this consideration upon the lukewarm and declining. It may, however, tend to alarm the conscience at ease, to remind it, that while fervent piety will not only save its possessor, but also the souls of other men; so a mere profession will fail in bringing to heaven those who trust in it, and also assist in keeping others from seeking it.

4. If disunion arises from a wrong state of heart, as well as from a weakness of judgment, it follows that personal piety, in proportion as it is active, will lessen the discords among Christians, and make them live in unity and godly love. Every man who studies his own heart is

aware that he is never so disposed to forget party names and divisions, as when he is alone with God, communing with his own spirit, and aiming at the increase of his own godliness. How insufficient do the causes of disunion then often appear! How the heart goes out towards good men of other denominations, whose writings benefit us, or whose active zeal urges onward our own sluggishness! We then feel as though we could embrace and love all who honour and serve the same Lord, however remote they may be from our opinions on many minor matters. Our nearness to Christ in such solemn moments makes us catch His spirit, and feel disposed to make any sacrifices to carry out His last prayer: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me!"

But we leave the hallowed retirement of devotion, and return to the active scenes of the world. We see our differing brethren in their relations to our own external circumstances—our creeds, our ordinances, our modes of public worship, and

our lower nature immediately takes occasion to make us exalt the accidental above the essential. Pride, self-confidence, and interested motives take the place in our hearts which Christ-like principles swayed before. In close proximity to our Saviour, we loved all who love Him; but as we recede from Him, we feel we can only love those who, by acting as we do, flatter ourselves.

But, even if it is an error of *judgment* that keeps us apart from each other, eminent piety will do much to remedy the evil, and to bring us to more correct modes of thinking. Let us remember that of all the various ways in which Christian people think on a given topic, *only one can be the right*. There is something very affecting in this, as involving the conclusion that so many must be wrong. Now, should we not think that it is as probable that the error is on our side, as on our neighbour's, and that, therefore, calm reflection and diligent search should characterize us? Let this temper of mind be conjoined with such godliness as would make us resign all for Christ, and an end would soon be put to discordant opinions. The light of a sted-

fast piety is the best to shew us the deformity of divisions and the beauty of concord ; as the darkness of declension and backsliding disposes us to mistake shadows for substance, and realities for mere illusions. As the health of the mind is promoted by a healthy body, so a sound judgment on religious subjects is favoured by holiness of heart.

Thirdly. PERSONAL GODLINESS WILL INFUSE INTO US THE ZEAL REQUISITE TO APPLY THE REMEDY FOR THE SPIRITUAL WANTS OF MANKIND.—Were we quite sure that our plans were the best that could be devised, and that if put into execution they would be sure to effect a large amount of religious benefit, there is still something more requisite before the work is accomplished ; the impediments in the way of active effort must be surmounted, such as our own love of ease, the fear of opposition from the objects of our Christian solicitude, and the dread so universally felt of being ridiculed by others. If we apply ourselves to direct efforts to do good only when we feel we have nothing else to occupy us, or when we are alert and active, we may miss

the season most appropriate, and thus lose our object. Selfishness, under the mask of necessary attention to our own wants, will at length make us indifferent to the claims of others. It is equally certain that little good will be done if we bring our benevolence to bear only on those who willingly submit to our experiments, for the natural man has a deep-seated dislike of any interference from without, with the affairs of his spirit, and we shall fail if we are daunted by indifference, or even opposition, on the part of the objects of our charity. The same observation holds good of the last obstacle alluded to ; a dread of ridicule will make our pleadings incoherent, and our arm powerless. Under its influence the weapons of our warfare will be carnal, and incapable of producing any good effect.*

Are we deeply conscious of the unhappy con-

* All men, in every walk of life, need to be on their guard against the strong and pernicious influence which *imitation* of others has upon them ; but Christians especially need this caution. As surely as men follow each other in dress and the minor customs of life, so do Christians, unless thus guarded, find themselves led by the lukewarm and worldly. Their frowns terrify, and their ridicule daunts them.

dition of irreligious men, and in possession of what we think effectual measures for their benefit? Of what use will be this sympathy and this knowledge, if we labour under the depressing influence of the above-mentioned causes? But an earnest piety will either banish these obstacles altogether, or enable us to overcome them. The great Teacher was superior to personal sloth, and the fear of others, in the discharge of His high mission, and all *great* philanthropists have had much of His spirit. Enjoying religion ourselves, we shall long to be occupied in diffusing its blessings, and false shame and degenerate fear will be dissipated by a sense of divine approval. Moses had much to contend with, many temptations to pusillanimity, during his training for his great work at the court of Pharaoh; but "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Few men had more to surmount of this kind than the apostle Paul; but when once the flame of holy love was kindled in his heart, he conferred not with flesh and blood, and felt himself more than a match for the loftiest scorers. Is not this also our own experience? Lively and happy

ourselves in the service of our Maker, we have had a zeal for others which nothing could daunt; but as soon as sin has clouded our conscience, our aims have been feeble, intermittent, and undefined. More need not be said on this subject, as it is too plain to require any laboured proof, that PERSONAL GODLINESS alone can make us sympathetic of others' woes, wise to conceive the adequate remedy, and courageous to apply it.

We would suggest that there is here abundant material for great searchings of heart, in reference to all the means of usefulness possessed by the Church of Christ in the present age, none of which appear to prosper to the extent we might reasonably hope.

And, *first*, let *Christian communities* in large neighbourhoods, which present at first sight most desirable fields of active usefulness, inquire what is the cause that their places of worship are thinly attended, and that the "salt" seems to do nothing in healing the corrupt masses around them? Can anything be more anomalous, more extraordinary, or more calculated to induce serious reflections, than the fact, that, in London

and elsewhere, there are at this time sanctuaries honoured by age, and once the scene of religious prosperity, but which might now almost as well close their doors, for any effect they produce upon their populous neighbourhoods ! Then there are the tens of thousands in the manufacturing districts, who are sunk to the lowest state of moral debasement, living without God and without hope in the world ;—in too many instances, a sensual, profane, and uncivilized race ! For all this, is there not a cause ? Let it not be said that such a state of things arises from the want of a *popular ministry*, or a more *fashionable denomination* to work the outward machinery ; it lies deeper than this ! Oh for sufficient zeal for God and man, to lead to a determined search to discover the source of it !

The whole history of the present age is a commentary on the proverb, that *where there is a will there is a way*, to accomplish designs in which the heart is engaged ; and, as the result of this, we see all obstacles in the way of commercial undertakings and physical improvements disappear by a sort of magic. Many millions of

money are ready for the completion of a railroad ; any amount of mental ingenuity and scientific knowledge is brought to bear on the magnetic telegraph ; because these results deeply interest mankind, and promise to favour their pecuniary interests or personal convenience. But what difficulty there is in building churches, endowing schools, or finding adequate resources for missionary enterprises ! Could this be the case if religion were what it professes to be, *the great concern* and *the one thing needful*, in the estimation of its disciples ? If we loved Christ as we love the world, the emotion would shew itself in corresponding impulse and action. If we *counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*, more sacrifices would be made for the promotion of the cause which lies so near His heart.

Secondly. Let Sunday-school teachers cease to refer all their failures to the obstinacy and perverseness of human nature, and see whether more piety in themselves may not render that obstinacy more tractable, and that perverseness less wayward. If anything in connexion with

Christianity needs reforming more than another, it is the Sunday-school system, which, during the last half century has engrafted itself upon the visible Church, and is, in many cases, considered an integral part of it. Conceived by Christian benevolence as a remedy for temporary ills, to be disused when a more natural state of things could be brought about, it has come to be considered an *end*, and not the *means* to attain one, and displays, in many instances, the ominous sign of thinking itself perfect. Alas! how blind must those be, who have not discovered in most Sunday-schools the most grievous evils, in conjunction with a great amount of good.

More piety in teachers, will lead them to be more suspicious of the extent of their own qualifications for their office, and, as a consequence, more anxious to be themselves instructed. It will make them less conceited of the positions they hold, often without any warrant, previous training, or natural adaptation to the task. It will lead them to treat their ministers with more respect, to be more tender of their feelings, and more anxious for the prosperity of the Christian

system of which the Sunday school is only a small, a novel, and, scripturally, an unauthorized part. Let religion reign more in the hearts of teachers, and they will contemplate the possibility of their favourite occupation being superseded by the happy consummation of parents, their natural guardians, instructing their own offspring in the knowledge of God.. We have seen so many instances in which Sunday schools have been a sore trouble to clergymen and to quiet congregations, and the occasion of the loss of all modesty and simplicity on the part of self-constituted teachers, that we earnestly call the attention of the friends of these valuable institutions to the bearing of more *personal godliness* on their prosperity.*

* A dangerous spirit of conservatism takes fast hold of every new scheme of Christian usefulness, leading to its perpetuation after its proposed ends have been accomplished. We might name many societies to which this remark will apply, but it is not needful to do so. The creation of funds, and of a body of paid officers, naturally tends to make institutions, ephemeral in their own nature, appear as perpetual, and only to be superseded by the end of the world. Let there be Christianity enough in England to secure the Sunday training of children by their own parents, and then the Sunday school should disappear. But do its promoters ever aim at this?

A certain amount of good may probably be effected by a vain and careless instructor of the young, because the instruction he communicates having in itself a moral influence, it may sink into good soil, and vegetate in spite of the imperfections of the teacher. It is on this principle that we hope for the best, notwithstanding the innumerable faults which may be detected in the instruments, the highest as well as the lowest, by which the Gospel is conveyed to mankind. But if aimless and mere formal instruction thus accomplishes *some* good, what happy results might not be expected from that which is wisely and affectionately directed? A sower who should cast in the seed blindfolded, or throw it about at random, and then take no care to harrow it in, and to press and break the clods above it, would still secure a crop, although it would be one bearing no proportion to the labour expended and the quality of the soil. What a harvest then may *he* expect to reap who brings art to bear on the fertile powers of nature, and carefully deposits the seed all over the field!

Thirdly. Let the conductors and supporters of

missionary enterprizes at home or abroad, cultivate more of that *godliness which is profitable for all things*, and enquire whether the noble superstructures of effort which they present to the world, are founded sufficiently on the prayerfulness, and humble faith, and holy zeal of personal piety; or whether want of distinguished success abroad may not be referred, in some degree, to the deadening influence of declension and backsliding at home. Nothing should be done through strife or vain glory; emulations, competitions, wishes for denominational aggrandizement, should be unknown to those who venture to consult on the extension of Christ's name and kingdom in the earth. But who is sufficient for these things, but the man who is willing to be nothing, that his Master's cause, not that of a party, should become all in all?*

* We beg to illustrate the statement of the text by two instances of the substitution of denominationalism for a simple desire to do good. A body of Christians locate a number of missionaries on some foreign shore, among heathens, and their labours prosper. As soon as it is known that a fruitful soil has returned something to cheer the labourers, other parties at home find it their duty to proclaim their own peculiarities among the people newly converted to the faith, and thus introduce among

That something is wanting to ensure a larger measure of success in efforts to convert heathen nations, is too evident to need any proof. The whole of the societies at present existing keep up their interest in the public mind more by gilding the future with the hues of hope, than by presenting the more defined forms of present success. The Papist, who thinks he has Christianized a people, when he has changed the religion of the monarch who compels his subjects to follow him, or reckons among his converts the infants whom he baptizes in the article of death, can now taunt the Protestant with *his* want of success, because, after years of labour, but a very few persons are found rationally professing their attachment to Christ. We would tell the Papist that an entire failure would be better than his

them the differences of opinion which mar the beauty of Christianity at home. Again, a clergyman of a country parish is doing good, and exerting a beneficial influence upon his flock. The Wesleyan Methodists or the Baptists of a neighbouring town discover that the good man does not preach the Gospel (that is, *their* Gospel) and forthwith a chapel is erected, and the harmony of the village irreparably disturbed. This is excusable perhaps, where, unhappily, a clergyman is a bad liver, and neglects his flock; but what can be said of such conduct when he is known to be pious and faithful?

mockery and counterfeit of success, but, at the same time, we should receive the reproof as calculated to arouse our slumbering energies and kindle into flames our now smouldering love. Do we not all feel that if our personal piety were warmer, more good would be done, although we may not be able to point out the precise bearing of our religion on such a result?

But, *lastly*, the sphere of labour of most Christian men and women, is not the school, nor the committee room, but the home circle, which God has made a sphere large enough for a life of labour, and important enough for the noblest efforts of intellect and love. Oh that we duly felt this truth, for then we should be fellow-workers with God in that humble yet powerful manner in which all divine operations are carried on. To teach the infant's lips to lisp the name of Christ; to train its intellect to know Him, and its heart to love Him; to be the spiritual guide and counsellor of the childhood, youth, and manhood of those whom we love, and whom God has placed under our charge and control, is the holiest, as it is the most delightful task, com-

mitted to mortal man. We have said it *is*—we should rather say it *should be*;—and it *will be* so if we properly understand the POWER OF GODLINESS.

How keenly sensitive are we, as parents, for the temporal welfare of our beloved offspring, how ready to contrive schemes for their happiness, and to embrace what appear to be advantageous openings for their profit and honour in relation to the things which perish in the using! What is the reason of this, but that we act naturally, seeking for them what we ourselves feel to be dear and important to us. The training of the child thus becomes a faithful record of the heart of the parent, and our contrivances for its welfare tell an affecting tale of our own estimate of the value of the objects we seek for it. But this is a law of our nature which would operate just as forcibly in the direction of piety and heavenly things, did they occupy our affections as they ought to do. Let us think more highly of the *durable riches and righteousness* of a true Christian life; let us really prize things unseen and eternal, so as to set our affections

upon them ; and it will then be as impossible for us to neglect the souls of our children, as we find it, when absorbed with worldliness, to be unconcerned about their present interests.

Hitherto we have confined our attention to the effects of personal godliness on our own motives and conduct, as the active instruments of doing good to our fellow men. But there is another view to be taken of the question, of immense weight and importance ; we mean the bearing of a holy life on the conduct of others ; the influence exerted by a consistent example ; and the divinely appointed connection between a sincere exhibition of Christianity and its extension in the world. To this topic we must now briefly address ourselves, as completing the object contemplated by us in this Address.

Examples influence men ; this is a principle applicable to all circumstances of life, to patterns of virtue, and to exhibitions of vice. As a general law, it receives a special application in the

Christian system on the part both of Christ and His apostles. Our Saviour, in immediate connection with the doctrine which we have taken as one of our mottoes, gives this striking exhortation to his disciples ;—" Ye are the light of the world ; let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* This advice, coming immediately after he had compared his followers to the salt, intended to exert a purifying and conservative influence upon the earth, is doubtless intended to combine the silent influence of a good example with the more aggressive results of active zeal. The one is the active, the other the passive influence of a well-developed Christian character, and, in the order of means, both are intended to be combined.

This general exhortation takes a more special character in a later discourse of our blessed Lord. After He had washed his disciples' feet, to teach them humility and mutual love, He proceeds to point out the bearing of those graces on the world, by whom they should be

* Matt. v. 14, 16.

witnessed :—" A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* How correctly He prophesied we learn from Church history which records the exclamation of the heathen, " See how these Christians love one another!†"

Precisely in the same strain do the apostles recommend example as an efficient means of exciting a respect for Christianity. Thus St. Peter tells those to whom he wrote to abstain from fleshly lusts, and adds : " Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles ; that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."‡ St. Paul recognizes the same principle, operating through a bad example, when he informs Timothy that a bishop " must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the

* John xiii. 34, 35.

† Tertullian reports this as being said by Pagans :—" See how they love one another, and are ready to die for one another !"

‡ 1 Peter ii. 12.

snare of the devil.”* These texts are sufficient to shew what an important place our Lord and the sacred writers assign to the holy and consistent conduct of Christian men and women. On the one hand, their good example would remove objections and prejudices, and conciliate respect for their doctrine; on the other, inconsistencies in their conduct would strengthen a dislike for the truth, and confirm the heart in its opposition to its claims.

There is nothing in the circumstances of our own day which at all alters the necessity and the value of these great Scriptural principles. Human nature is the same as it was in the times of our Lord and his apostles, and the same antagonism unfortunately still exists between the Church and the world, as then called for these inspired declarations. It is true our whole country is *Christianized*, in the outward and least important sense of the word, so that no conflict is now necessary, on the part of the Gospel, with heathen systems and superstitions. But how far is Britain from being devoted to the

* 1 Tim. iii. 7.

service of the Redeemer, when the individual state of her millions of inhabitants is considered ! Real personal religion, and the mere form of godliness, are now as strongly contrasted as Christianity and Paganism, or Judaism, were in the first ages, and there is consequently the same necessity now as there was then for the exhibition of a holy example by Christ's sincere followers. Not one of the texts we have quoted has become in the slightest degree obsolete, by any new phase which human nature has put on. Not one of them has lost its force, by a change of the relative positions of those who serve God and those who serve Him not.

As long as Christian men and women make no special profession of their subjection to the authority of the New Testament—as long as they use Christian expressions with their lips, but forget and neglect them in their lives, all goes on smoothly enough, and they may pass through the world as good citizens, with no particular criticism of their characters, or censorious animadversion upon their faults. But let them act up to their baptismal vows, and make re-

ligion a matter of personal and every day concern, and strive to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world, and how narrowly are they watched, and how severely are their blemishes held up to scorn! Ungenerous and unworthy is this treatment, because while *striving* to live as Christians should, no enlightened person professes to be perfect. But such is the fact, notwithstanding, that if we try to be Christians in reality, we are at once made the mark for a searching enquiry, and a severe denunciation of our aberrations from the straight path of duty. Hence the necessity of much religion, to keep us unspotted from the world, and to afford no just ground for the calumnies of the gainsayers.

It must be confessed that much of the dislike manifested to evangelical piety in the present day, has arisen from the indiscretion of its advocates and professors. There has been too much *talk* of religion, and too little display of its genius and spirit. When worldly minds are accosted by some enthusiastic spirit, which professes to be holier than themselves, and yet dis-

plays no superiority in anything but in words, we are not to be surprised that opposition is aroused and dislike engendered. But it is when, along with quietness and meekness of temper, there is a manifest superiority of character possessed by Christ's people, that hatred is disarmed, and, in many cases, an example presented which is admired and followed. It is by *fruits* actually produced, not by an assumption of fertility, that Christ says men are to be known. Now to be fruitful in every good work, without ostentation and spiritual pride, is precisely what is wanted to make Christians the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It is easy to make professions, it is hard to act up to them; hence a good example can only be presented by those who cultivate piety in the soul, who, in other words, possess real personal godliness.

To do good then, passively, by the influence of example, this vital religion must be possessed. Much more is it needed before we can take that active and aggressive attitude which we have before advocated in this Address. If we would not have men turn from them all our efforts to

do them good with the taunting proverb, "Physician heal thyself!" we must strive that our professions and our actions correspond, and that we are indeed qualified to be to the corrupt state of things around us, the salt of the earth.

Our task is now performed, and it only remains that we collect together the topics of our argument, and press the conclusion to which we think it has brought us. The world, both at home and abroad, is in a condition which falls far short of what the Gospel is intended to produce, and something is needed to make it more effectual in putting a stop to vice, and producing that holiness of heart and life, without which there can be no real happiness here or hereafter. The question then suggests itself, How is this irreligious state of things to be altered—how is Christianity to be made more efficient in benefiting our fellow-men? The general reply is, an increase of agency and outward machinery for preaching the Gospel, circulating the Bible, and bringing into greater activity the ordinary means of grace. We need not say that all these things *must* be done; but we suggest that this is not

all that is demanded of those who mourn over man's fallen state, and seek his restoration to the divine image and favour. The same infinitely wise mind which has appointed the preaching of the Word, the circulation of the Bible, and the instruction of the young, as the means of building up His Church, has also defined a sphere of operation in the heart of every individual. He has made all his people temples of the Holy Ghost, and when they rightly receive that heavenly guest, and his graces shine in their conduct and conversation, they become energetic, though perhaps silent, agents for the extension of Christ's kingdom. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world; they are living illustrations and examples of the **POWER OF GODLINESS.**

One thing is certain, that the members of Christ's Church never had greater demand on their united counsels than now: and they should meet in conclave, in dependence on the spirit of wisdom, and resolved to do all in their power to check the downward course of all that is dear to their hearts, and valuable to man. But should

they meet and deliberate with the utmost solemnity and most patient watchfulness, we feel sure they must come to the conclusion to which this address has brought us, that personal godliness is the want of the times. The evils of which we complain are to be remedied by no Episcopal or Presbyterian charges, though they may indicate the right method of cure; they will yield only to private and individual reformation, felt to be necessary by ourselves, and wrought out in retirement and under the eye of God. How interesting and encouraging is this fact, that *I* can at once bring about that in *MY* case, which if done by others will elevate the Church and bless the world! The revival we need will not be bestowed upon crowded assemblies, and excited public speeches and prayers; it will be given to a spirit humble and subdued, yet powerful; delicate as the morning air and the dew, yet magnificent in its results as the effects produced by those simple natural agencies. Each man must mourn *apart*, and pray *apart*, and from these lowly exercises believers will rise up, transformed from trembling backsliders and use-

less labourers, into energetic and efficient champions of the cross !

For this blessed change, what sacrifice can be too great ? Nothing will more promote our own happiness, or more effectually enable us to win men to the Redeemer. The sighing of the heart after a clear sense of our own interest in the blessings of the Gospel will be exchanged for the voice of thanksgiving. "In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortedst me." Pardoned and sanctified ourselves, we shall indeed be the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. The noblest objects which the intellect and the heart can favour will then have our best energies, nor can we doubt that God will abundantly bless us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

The sum of all we have said is, that to do good to others we must first look at home. This is the divine order of means, and we cannot disturb it with impunity. There is a spirit in the

religious world which inverts this order, and makes bustle, and public work, and an excitement in the midst of party agencies to take the place of that pure religion and undefiled, which is adorned by a meek and quiet spirit. We do not wish to discourage anything which aims at doing good, for we hope that even where it may be indiscreet and enthusiastic, it will yet accomplish some benefit; but we *do* see the necessity of more being thought of the religion of the soul, which, although inaccessible in its retreats to mortal eye, will make itself known in deeds of pious love. There is a reform needed everywhere in this particular, and the sooner it is begun, the quicker shall we realize a larger measure of God's blessing on our public efforts. The strength of a kingdom is the probity and patriotism of the bulk of its citizens, not the brilliant deeds or qualities of a few heroes and statesmen. So the glory of Christ's Church is the true piety of the whole of its members, not the eloquence of its ministers and the pomp and excitement of its public institutions.

Christian brethren ! There is a beauty in con-

sistency, for the want of which no professions can atone; yet we are destitute of this grace when we declare that the souls of men are more valuable than anything else, and at the same time neglect their interests for the most trifling and temporary advantages. If what has been stated in this address can be looked upon as the rhapsody of an enthusiast, its appeals may properly be cast aside and forgotten; but if we have written the words of truth and soberness, we can only secure peace of conscience, and the ornament of consistency, by immediate and zealous action. Let us pray that we may clearly discern *what is our duty* in our respective spheres, and then implore divine strength to assist us in faithfully performing it. Lukewarmness and indifference—both in reference to our own religious advancement, and the happiness of our fellow-men—are the sad evidences of a fallen state, which we find ever present with us, ready, in our moments of carelessness, to throw us back into a condition which we hoped we had left for ever. How earnestly, therefore, should we watch against all approaches of this sloth, and strive to

counteract this deterioration of religious feeling! How prayerfully ought we to bring before us daily, a recognition of our responsibility, and seek to act, not as beings placed in an isolated position, and spending our lives in attending to our own immediate interests, but as stewards of a certain influence to be exerted beneficially on others! How is this high honour with which God has endowed us, in making us fellow-workers together with Him in his benevolent designs, slighted by us! We are called, as we have opportunity, *to do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith*; but we too often interpret this divine rule as relating only to works of kindness and charity to the body, and as having nothing to do with the immortal soul. How sadly do we thus forget the example of our Master, who went about doing good to *the whole of man*, bodily, socially, and spiritually!

May we not say to each other, as Christians, *Now it is high time to awake out of sleep!* Too long have we acted as if energy and zeal were terms applicable only to a bygone age, and ease,

and softness, and sloth were allowable in us at this period of the Christian era. Compare the efforts of this age, on behalf of others, and see how far short they fall of those put forth by the believers of the first age of the Church. *Then*, all good men felt it their duty to enlighten and bless others, but *now*, Christian benevolence seems to be satisfied with a vicarious performance of its duties. But we cannot discharge by proxy, a work demanded of us as individuals; and, however much we may give of our substance to assist the more official instruments of evangelizing mankind, each one of us must give account of himself to God for our personal responsibilities. The engrossing worldly affairs which now seem to furnish sufficient excuse for our doing nothing to extend Christ's kingdom, will then appear as but vanities compared with the vast interests they caused us to postpone and neglect. Nothing, it is true, will make amends for the neglect of our own souls, not even the conversion of thousands of human beings to the faith we ourselves had slighted; but, our own salvation being first cared for, labours to benefit

the souls of others will be acceptable to God. For our own sakes then, let us rise to a proper sense of what is demanded of us, that our characters may want none of the perfectness they are capable, by God's blessing, of attaining. Let us do so, further, for the sake of others, whose best interests have been, in a very important sense, committed to our trust. We know that we have once experienced more love to others, and put forth more vigorous efforts for their happiness, and why should this bright Christian grace be allowed to lose its lustre and become almost extinguished? If our attempt in these pages should rekindle former fires, or even prevent the smouldering embers from being extinguished, so that the breath of prayer, or a propitious gale from heaven may fan them into a flame, our sincere desire will be realized, and God shall have all the glory.

FOR ACTION.

And now for action ! Nerve my powerless arm,
And swiftness to my lingering feet impart.
Oh ! let no fair excuses longer charm
My lips to silence, nor enchain my heart.
Give me the Teacher's sweet persuasive art !

When apt to tire in seeking other's weal,
All-gracious Lord, inspire me with Thy love ;
And let me stand resolved, nor sluggish feel,
My work below, my hoped reward above,
An earnest soul whom frowns nor smiles can move.

If ever joy my saddened heart inspired,
I found the treasure when I did Thy will ;
Of sordid aims and worldly prospects tired,
Let zeal again my contrite spirit fill ;
For man and Thee, a faithful labourer still.

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